



GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

Guidelines

Note: These guidelines were developed by Nouhad Hayek, Reviser at the Conference Services Section of ESCWA, on the basis of the following references: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language*, 1987; Service-Growth Consultants Inc., *Examples of gender-sensitive language*, May 2003; National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), *Guidelines for Gender-fair Use of Language*, 1975, Revised 2002, United States of America; and George F. Simons and G. Deborah Weisman, *Men and Women: Partners at Work*, Crisp Publications, Inc., 1990.

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Introduction

Language not only reflects the way writers think; it also shapes the thinking of listeners or readers and influences their behaviour. Word choices often carry unconscious assumptions about gender roles. The use of terms only referring to males is not accepted anymore, as excluding women is considered an offence. Language should therefore be used with a high degree of precision.

Avoiding discrimination between men and women starts with language, as the systematic use of gender-biased terminology influences attitudes and expectations and could, in the mind of the reader, relegate women to the background or help extending the survival of a stereotyped view of masculine and feminine roles.

The United Nations directives in that regard invite United Nations staff to avoid to the extent possible the use of language which refers explicitly or implicitly to only one sex, and to ensure (according to each language's characteristics) the use of non-sexist/gender-sensitive/neutral language.

These guidelines present the following:

- Sex and gender: definition and difference between the two terms;
- United Nations official instructions with regard to the use of gender-sensitive language;
- Alternatives and solutions to gender-biased language in English;
- Some partial solutions to gender-biased language in Arabic;
- Resources for further reference;
- A detailed list of gender-biased language examples and gender-sensitive alternatives (provided in the annex).

I. SEX AND GENDER

Sex: biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Sex characteristics do not vary between societies (for example menstruation, reproductive capacity and breast feeding are women's characteristics, while men generally have more massive bones).

Gender: socially constructed attributes, roles, behaviours and activities that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender roles are the activities ascribed to men and women on the basis of perceived societal differences. Gender roles vary greatly between societies: division of labour in families, communities and the marketplace; access to education, health care, job opportunities, financial resources and decision-making roles; and other issues.

II. UNITED NATIONS INSTRUCTIONS ON THE USE OF GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

United Nations Secretariat Administrative instruction: ST/IC/1992/67 of 29 October 1992

- Bias-free language is important because language reflects the attitudes of the user.
- Expressions or words that suggest superiority of one gender over the other should be avoided.

Editorial directive: ST/CS/SER.A/41 of 14 August 1998

To: All those concerned with drafting and editing United Nations documents

Subject: Use of gender-sensitive language

- Pay maximum attention to the need to use gender-sensitive language when writing in their official capacity;
- Avoid sex-specific and potentially discriminatory expressions.

III. ALTERNATIVES AND SOLUTIONS TO GENDER-BIASED LANGUAGE

When meaning both sexes, we should use a term that includes both. Writers, speakers, teachers, public figures, media persons, United Nations staff should examine their language to reduce choices that exclude or stereotype others.

Each language has its own characteristics; solutions to gender-biased terms and expressions vary between languages. The following guidelines are mainly for the English language. However, some tips are also offered for the Arabic language.

A. FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

With regard to the English language, it is almost always possible to find alternative terms and sentence structures to avoid gender-biased or stereotyping language.

1. The use of pronouns

Examples and proposed alternatives

The client should receive his invoice in two weeks.	The client should receive his or her invoice in two weeks (alternately reverse order: her or his).
	The client should receive the (or an) invoice in two weeks.
	The invoice will be sent to the client in two weeks.
Each participant must present his ID badge at the door.	All participants must present their ID badges at the door.
	Each participant must present his/her ID badge at the door.
A good judge relies, to some degree, on his common sense.	A good judge relies, to some degree, on common sense.
	A good judge relies, to some degree, on his or her common sense.
A good employee knows that he should strive for excellence.	A good employee strives for excellence.
	A good employee knows that she/he should strive for excellence.
	A good employee knows that s/he should strive for excellence.
The teacher is usually appointed on the basis of his training.	Teachers are usually appointed on the basis of their training.
	A teacher is usually appointed on the basis of her or his training.
Anyone disagreeing with this statement should give his reasons.	All those disagreeing with this statement should give their reasons.
	Anyone disagreeing with this statement should give his or her reasons.
	Anyone disagreeing with this statement should give their reasons (the singular plural can be used with caution).
Each examinee should hand in his paper promptly.	Each examinee should hand in his/her paper promptly.
	Each examinee should hand in the paper promptly.
	All examinees should hand in their papers promptly.

The individual is strongly influenced by his family's values.	As individuals, we are strongly influenced by our families' values.
	Individuals are strongly influenced by their families' values.
	The individual is strongly influenced by his or her family's values.
When every participant contributes his own ideas, the discussion will be a success.	When all participants contribute their own ideas, the discussion will be a success.
	When every participant contributes her or his own ideas, the discussion will be a success.
Each staff will do better if he has a voice in the decision.	Each staff will do better if s/he has a voice in the decision.
	All staff will do better if they have a voice in the decision.

Summary of pronoun solutions

- He/she; she/he; he or she; she or he; s/he
- His/her; her/his; his or her; her or his
- Use the plural. It is the preferable option
- Rephrase to omit the pronoun
- Replace with a definite article (the) or an indefinite article (a)

2. Exclusionary terms

Examples and proposed alternatives

Man	Person; individual; human being
Mankind	Humanity; human beings; people; men and women
Chairman	Chairperson; chair; president (in certain cases)
Spokesman	Spokesperson; representative; (when talking about a specific person: Mr. John is the spokesman of the President; Ms. Jeanette Walker is the spokeswoman of the President)
Businessman	Business manager; business agent; business entrepreneur
The average man	The average person/individual; people in general
Manpower	Workforce; human power; labour force; workers
To man (verb) a project	To staff a project; to hire personnel for the project; to run/operate a project
Man-made	Of human origin; human-induced; (opposite to natural: artificial; synthetic)
Cameraman	Camera operator; for plural: camera crew
Policeman	Police officer (when talking about a specific person: John is a policeman; Mary is a policewoman)
Founding fathers	Founders
Manhood	Adulthood (when referring to people in general and not to males)
Gentleman's agreement	Honourable agreement; unwritten agreement
Landlord; landlady	Owner; proprietor
Brotherhood	Solidarity; human fellowship; human kinship

Proposed correction of exclusionary terms in ESCWA documents

Pursuant to that rule, Jordan, upon which the rotation by alphabetical order has fallen, shall assume the chairmanship of the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources, succeeding Yemen, which assumed the chairmanship of the ninth session. The Committee shall elect two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur among its member country representatives. Based on established practice, the vice-chairmen shall be the past chairman of the Committee and the subsequent chairman of the Committee according to alphabetical rotation.

Pursuant to that rule, Jordan, upon which the rotation by alphabetical order has fallen, shall **chair** the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources, succeeding Yemen, which **chaired** the ninth session. The Committee shall elect two **vice-chairs** and a rapporteur among its member country representatives. Based on established practice, the **vice-chairs** shall be the past **chair** of the Committee and the subsequent **chair** of the Committee according to alphabetical rotation.

3. Stereotyping roles and attributes

Do not represent certain jobs as only appropriate or held by women or men. Examples to be avoided:

- Professors are men and elementary teachers are women;
- Politicians are men and women are wives;
- Housework is the duty of women and an option or out of question for men;
- Scientists are men and secretaries are women;
- Doctors are men and nurses are women.

Do not represent women and men as possessing stereotypic gendered attributes. Examples to be avoided:

- Men are independent; women are dependent;
- Men are admired for their accomplishments, women for their physical attributes;
- Men are active; women are passive;
- Men are ambitious; women are modest;
- Men are leaders; women are followers.

Examples and proposed alternatives

(Manager talking to the director): I'll have my girl make the meeting arrangements.	I'll ask my assistant (or secretary) to make the meeting arrangements.
The Convention participants and their wives are invited.	The Convention participants and their spouses/guests are invited.
John and Mary both have full-time jobs; he helps her with the housework.	John and Mary both have full-time jobs; they share the housework.
Transport will be provided for delegates and their wives.	Transport will be provided for delegates and their spouses or persons accompanying them .
All the ladies on the committee supported the proposed amendment.	All the women on the committee supported the proposed amendment.
A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on him. He must cope with this or lose popularity.	A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on her/him . He/she must cope with this or lose popularity (the plural and s/he can also be used)

Maria is a career woman.	Maria is a professional . Maria is an engineer (do we say John is a career man?).
A nurse knows that every day she will touch a life or a life will touch hers.	A nurse knows that every day she/he will touch a life or a life will touch hers/his (or use the plural).
Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often neglect their families .
You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read his prescription.	You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read her/his prescription.

4. Existing titles and names of programmes and entities

As a rule, existing titles of programmes and names of entities cannot be changed when we refer to them in our speeches or texts. Gender-biased terms should be avoided in new titles and names. Some entities and organizations proceeded to change the name of some of their programmes and some of their official basic documents, including agreements, rules of procedures, etc.

In 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) changed the title of its collection *History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind* to the new title: *History of Humanity*.

5. Textual citations

Gender-biased quoted citations cannot be altered. Depending on the context and the citation, choices include:

- Keep citation between quotes. Example: Thomas Jefferson wrote in the United States Declaration of Independence: “*All men are created equal*.”
- Change direct quotation into a paraphrase that avoids non-equitable language while retaining the author's intent and idea. If we are sure that the term “men” was meant by the author as including both men and women, we can paraphrase to replace men with “men and women” or “people” and remove the quotes.
- Consider avoiding the quotation altogether whenever doing so does not detract from the purpose and tone of text.

6. Personal titles

Examples and proposed alternatives

Miss, Mrs.	Ms. (unless the woman herself prefers the courtesy title Mrs. or Miss). A woman's marital status is very often irrelevant to the matter in hand.
Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith; or Jane and John Smith; or Mrs. Jane and Mr. John Smith
Mrs. Michael Austen	Ms. Patricia Austen

B. FOR THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

1. No set guidelines for Arabic gender-sensitive language

There are no set gender-sensitive guidelines for the Arabic language. In Arabic, verbs, adjectives and pronouns have to concord with the subject. So, it becomes cumbersome for the reader if the feminine is put next to the masculine in every instance.

An Arabic gender-sensitive sentence will look like this:

- على المواطن/المواطنة الملتزم/الملتزمة أن يقوم/تقوم بكذا وكذا وأن يعمل/تعمل على كذا ولكنه/ولكنها كذا، وهو/هي يُعتبر/تُعتبر...
- على المواطن/ة الملتزم/ة أن يقوم/تقوم بكذا وكذا وأن يعمل/تعمل على كذا ولكنه/ها كذا، وهو/هي يُعتبر/تُعتبر ...

2. Existing solutions to some gender-biased terms in Arabic

Some instances of gender-biased language can, however, be solved; among those are titles and labels for roles and professions of women; the use of the term "رجال" (men) when referring to occupational fields in general; and direct addresses to the reader or audience.

(a) Professional and occupational titles of women

In general, the generic use of the masculine form of post titles for both sexes is considered acceptable. The masculine form in texts of general nature can be maintained to designate unidentified persons. However, when the actual office-holder is a woman, her title should, to the extent possible, be given in feminine form.

Solutions in titles/labels for women

الرئيس:	الرئيسة
الوزير:	الوزيرة
المدير:	المديرة
النائب:	النائبة (إلا إذا أصررت صاحبة الشأن على استخدام صيغة المذكر باعتبار أن عبارة نائبة تعني مصيبة)
العميد:	العميدة
النقيب:	النقيبة
الأمين العام:	الأمينة العامة
المندوب:	المندوبة
الممثل:	الممثلة
الوكيل:	الوكيلة

Example from ESCWA

In the past, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, male or female, was referred to in Arabic masculine terms:

- وكيل الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة والأمين التنفيذي للإسكوا

Now, the present Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA is referred to as:

- وكيلة الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة والأمينة التنفيذية للإسكوا

(b) *The use of the term "رجال"*

When referring to occupational fields in general, the explicit use of the term "رجال" can be avoided.

Alternatives to the term "رجال"

رجال الأعمال	أصحاب الأعمال
رجال الشرطة	أفراد/عناصر الشرطة
رجال الفكر	المفكرون
رجال السياسة	السياسيون
رجال الإسعاف	المسعفون

(c) *Direct address to the reader or listener*

When directly addressing the reader or the audience, in texts, footnotes, questionnaires and others, it is recommended to use gender-sensitive alternatives, especially in instances when concordance of verbs, subjects, adjectives and pronouns is not required.

Solutions in addressing the reader or listener directly

انظر الوثيقة المعنونة...	يرجى النظر إلى الوثيقة المعنونة... أو: انظر/انظري...
أجب على الأسئلة التالية...	يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية... أو: أجب/أجبي على...
املاً الاستبيان التالي...	يرجى ملء الاستبيان التالي... أو: املاً/املئي الاستبيان...

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

- Empire State College – State University of New York, *Gender-exclusive language: introduction and exercise*. http://www8.esc.edu/esconline/across_esc/writerscomplex.nsf/0/564e043922d70d98852569c3006d727e?OpenDocument.
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- University of North Carolina, USA, *Gender-Sensitive Language*. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/gender.html>.
- Writing Help Central, *Gender-Neutral Equivalent Words*. <http://www.writinghelp-central.com/gender-neutral.html>.

ANNEX

EXAMPLES OF GENDER-BIASED LANGUAGE AND PROPOSED GENDER-SENSITIVE ALTERNATIVES

I. TERMS

Biased	Neutral	Comment
A man's home is his castle.	Your home is your castle.	
average man; man in the street	the average person/individual; people in general	
Brotherhood	solidarity; human fellowship; human kinship	
Caveman	cave dweller	
committee of wise men	committee of counselors/ eminent persons; advisory panel	
common man	the average (or ordinary) person	
Craftsmanship	craft; craft skills	
Every man for himself.	Everyone for themselves.	
fellow countryman	compatriot	
Forefathers	ancestors; forebears	
founding fathers	founders	
fraternal twins	non-identical twins	
gentleman's agreement	honourable agreement; unwritten agreement	
Girl	woman (unless when talking about age groups of people)	
Lady	woman	Use lady only as a parallel to gentleman.
landlord/landlady	owner; proprietor	
Layman	layperson; non-specialist; non- professional; novice	
man (noun)	person, individual; human being	
man (verb): to man a project	to staff (a project); to hire personnel for the project; to employ staff for the project; to operate/run/administer a project	
man and wife	husband and wife; wife and husband	
man; mankind	people, human beings, humanity; humankind; the human species; the human race; we; ourselves; men and women; one; the public; society; the self; human nature	
manholes	utility holes; sewer holes	
manhood	adulthood	
manlike	humanlike	
man-made	Handmade; manufactured; artificial; machine-made; synthetic; of human construction; of human origin; human-induced; technogenic	These are alternatives, the appropriate term will depend on the context.

Biased	Neutral	Comment
man-made versus natural disasters	disasters caused by humans versus natural disasters	
man-months; man-year	work-months; staff-months; work-year; staff-year	
manpower	workers; workforce; employees; personnel; labour; human power; human resources	
man's achievements	human achievements; achievements of our ancestors	
man's best friend	Dog	
man-to-man	head-to-head, face-to-face	
master (noun)	owner; expert; chief; superior	
master (verb)	learn; succeed at; overcome	
masterful	skillful, expert	
master key	Passkey	
mastermind (noun)	genius; creator; instigator	mastermind (noun)
mastermind (verb)	oversee; launch; originate	
masterpiece	great work of art; work of genius; chef d'oeuvre	masterpiece
master plan	main plan; primary plan; comprehensive plan; vision	
master's degree	graduate degree	
men and girls	men and women; women and men	
mother country	homeland	
Mother Earth	earth, world, planet earth	
mothering	parenting; nurturing; child-rearing; childcare; affection (or specify exact behaviour); mollycoddling, fussing (if pejorative sense is intended)	
Mother Nature	nature	
mother tongue	native language	
noblemen	noble people	
no-man's-land	uninhabited land, neutral zone	
prehistoric man	prehistoric human being	
primitive man	primitive people or peoples; primitive human beings; primitive men and women/women and men	
snowman	snow person	
Uncle Sam	United States of America	
workmen's compensation	workers' compensation	
yes-man	avid follower, supporter	
young man	youth; teenager	

II. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL TITLES

Biased	Neutral	Comment
anchorman; anchorwoman	anchor; news anchor	
authoress	author (for both)	Avoid the suffix –ess wherever possible. It is often pejorative or perceived as such.
barman; barmaid	bartender	
businessman	business executive; business manager; business person; business entrepreneur; head of company; (plural: business community; business people)	The appropriate term will depend on the context.
cameraman	camera operator; photographer; (plural) camera crew	
chairman	chair; chairperson; president; presiding officer When addressing the individual: Madam Chairperson, Mr. Chairperson	When new bodies are set up or rules of procedure, etc. of existing bodies are updated, chairperson, chair or president should be used in place of chairman.
chairmanship	There is no unbiased equivalent term.	Rephrasing would be required in this case. Ex: Jordan will <u>assume the chairmanship of the committee</u> . Replace with: Jordan <u>will chair</u> the committee.
cleaning lady	cleaner	
congressman; congresswoman	congressional representative; legislator; representative	Use congressman or congresswoman only when intending specific persons.
craftsman	crafts worker; artisan; craftsperson; (plural) craftspeople	
delivery boy	courier; messenger	
doorman	guard; security guard	
fireman	firefighter; (plural) fire crew; fire brigade	
foreman	supervisor; superintendent	
freshman	first-year student	
front man	front; figurehead	
hostess	Host	
housewife	homemaker; consumer; customer; shopper	Be specific according to context. The person designated need not be female. If you have to use it, put it between quotes: ‘housewife’.
lady lawyer	lawyer	
mailman; postman	mail carrier; letter carrier; postal worker	

Biased	Neutral	Comment
male nurse	nurse	Specify sex if sex indication is relevant to the context.
masseuse	massage therapist	
master of ceremonies	host; emcee; moderator; convener	
men of letters	scholars; writers; literary figures	
middleman	intermediary	
midwife	midwife (for both) Alternative: birthing specialist	The term midwife looks superficially to be feminine (since it ends with <i>-wife</i>), but etymologically it is appropriate to use it to refer to someone of either gender; the term comes from an old English term meaning " <i>with the woman</i> ".
newsman	reporter; journalist; correspondent	
office boy	messenger; clerk	
ombudsman	mediator; troubleshooter; ombudsperson; ombuds; ombud	Alternatively, a woman might prefer to be called ombudswoman.
poetess	poet (for both)	Avoid the suffix <i>-ess</i> wherever possible.
policeman	police officer; in plural just police 'John Smith is a <i>policeman</i> '; but 'it is the duty of every <i>police officer</i> to...'	
repairman	repairer; technician	
salesman; sales girl	sales clerk; sales representative; sales agent; shop assistant; sales assistant; shop worker; (plural) sales staff	
seamstress	tailor, sewer, mender, needle worker	
serviceman	service representative	
serviceman	soldier; sailor	
shipmaster	captain; commander	
showman	actor; performer; entertainer	
showmanship	stage presence	
spaceman	astronaut	
spokesman	spokesperson; representative; official Ms. XX was the spokeswoman; but The delegation shall appoint a spokesperson/representative...	Use spokesman or spokeswoman as appropriate when a specific person is intended. This applies generally to all terms that end with the suffix <i>-man</i> .

Biased	Neutral	Comment
sportsman	athlete; sportsman/sportswoman (where a specified person is meant)	
statesman	political leader; stateswoman (where appropriate)	
stewardess	steward (for both); flight attendant; (plural) cabin crew	Avoid the suffix –ess wherever possible.
switchman	switch operator	
trash man	trash collector	
waitress	waiter	Avoid the suffix –ess wherever possible.
watchman	guard	
weatherman	weathercaster, meteorologist	
woman doctor	doctor	Specify sex only if sex indication is relevant to the context.
woman pilot; woman photographer; woman judge; woman driver; woman doctor; etc.	pilot; photographer; judge; driver; doctor	No need to specify that it is a woman because it would imply that this profession is usually for men.
workman	worker	

III. PRONOUNS

Biased	Neutral	Comment
The teacher is usually appointed on the basis of his training.	Teachers are usually appointed on the basis of their training.	Changed to plural .
The learner should not be cut off from his roots; his own culture and traditions should be respected.	Learners should not be cut off from their roots; their own culture and traditions should be respected.	Changed to plural .
The individual is strongly influenced by his family's values.	As individuals, we are strongly influenced by our families' values. Individuals are strongly influenced by their families' values.	Changed to plural .
There were 16 girls and 16 boys in the class. Each child was to write an essay on his favourite hobby.	There were 16 girls and 16 boys in the class. Each child was to write an essay on his or her favourite hobby. There were 16 girls and 16 boys in the class. They were to write essays on their favourite hobby.	Alternately reverse order to her or his ; however, use this sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition. Changed to plural .
Anyone disagreeing with this statement should give his reasons.	All those disagreeing with this statement should give their reasons.	Changed to plural .

Biased	Neutral	Comment
The client should receive <u>his</u> invoice in two weeks.	The client should receive <u>his or her</u> invoice in two weeks. The client should receive <u>the/an</u> invoice in two weeks.	Alternately reverse order to her or his ; however, use this sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition. Pronoun replaced with definite or indefinite article .
Each participant must present <u>his</u> ID badge at the door.	<u>All</u> participants must present <u>their</u> ID badges at the door.	Changed to plural .
A good judge relies, to some degree, on <u>his</u> common sense.	A good judge relies, to some degree, on common sense.	Omit the pronoun.
When everyone contributes <u>his</u> own ideas, the discussion will be a success.	When <u>all participants</u> contribute <u>their</u> own ideas, the discussion will be a success. When everyone contributes <u>her or his</u> own ideas, the discussion will be a success.	Changed to plural . Use her/his and his/her alternately but sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition.
Each examinee should hand in <u>his</u> paper promptly.	Each examinee should hand in <u>his/her</u> paper promptly. Each examinee should hand in <u>the</u> paper promptly.	Use his/her and her/his alternately but sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition. Pronoun replaced with definite article .
Each manager should report <u>his</u> progress to the supervisor by 15 May.	<u>Managers</u> should report <u>their</u> progress to the supervisor by 15 May.	Changed to plural . His/her or her/his can also be used.
Each staff will do better if <u>he</u> has a voice in the decision.	Each staff will do better if <u>he/she</u> has a voice in the decision. <u>All</u> staff will do better if <u>they</u> have a voice in the decision.	Use he/she and she/he alternately but sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition. Changed to plural .

IV. REPHRASING

Biased	Neutral	Comment
<u>Man's</u> search for knowledge has led him to improve scientific methodology.	The search for knowledge has led us to improve scientific methodology.	Rephrased using first person.
	The search for knowledge has led people to improve scientific methodology.	Rephrased using "people" instead of "man".
	The search for knowledge has led to improvements in scientific methodology.	Rephrased, leaving the agent implicit.

Biased	Neutral	Comment
Pursuant to that rule, Jordan, upon which the rotation by alphabetical order has fallen, shall assume the <u>chairmanship</u> of the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources, succeeding Yemen, which assumed the <u>chairmanship</u> of the ninth session. The Committee shall elect two <u>vice-chairmen</u> and a rapporteur among its member country representatives. Based on established practice, the <u>vice-chairmen</u> shall be the past <u>chairman</u> of the Committee and the subsequent <u>chairman</u> of the Committee according to alphabetical rotation.	Pursuant to that rule, Jordan, upon which the rotation by alphabetical order has fallen, shall <u>chair</u> the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources, succeeding Yemen, which <u>chaired</u> the ninth session. The Committee shall elect two <u>vice-chairs</u> and a rapporteur among its member country representatives. Based on established practice, the <u>vice-chairs</u> shall be the past <u>chair</u> of the Committee and the subsequent <u>chair</u> of the Committee according to alphabetical rotation.	Note that “shall assume the chairmanship” was replaced by “shall <u>chair</u> ”, as there is no equivalent unbiased term.
A good employee knows that <u>he</u> should strive for excellence.	A good employee strives for excellence.	Rephrased to omit the pronoun.

V. STEREOTYPING ALLUSIONS

Biased	Neutral	Comment
This woman’s husband lets her work part-time.	This woman’s husband <u>‘lets’</u> her work part-time. The husband says he <u>‘lets’</u> his wife work part-time. This woman works part-time.	Quotes added to clarify location of the bias, that is, with husband and wife, not with author. The word ‘sic’ may also be inserted. Always consider the context. In some cases the example quoted may be literally accurate. If necessary, rewrite to clarify as allegation. The author of the example quoted intended to communicate the working status of the woman but inadvertently revealed a stereotype about husband-wife relationships.
John and Mary both have full-time jobs; he <u>helps</u> her with the housework.	... they <u>share</u> the housework.	This example implies that housework is a duty for a woman, optional for a man. The alternative is still comprehensive enough to designate a traditional situation, since it does not imply that they necessarily share equally. Whether they do can be made clear by the context.

Biased	Neutral	Comment
Research scientists often neglect their <u>wives</u> and children.	Research scientists often neglect their <u>families</u> .	Alternative wording acknowledges that women as well as men can be research scientists.
The Convention participants and their <u>wives</u> are invited.	The Convention participants and their <u>spouses/guests</u> are invited.	
Transport will be provided for delegates and their <u>wives</u> .	Transport will be provided for delegates and their <u>spouses</u> or <u>persons accompanying them</u> .	
You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read <u>his</u> prescription.	You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read <u>her/his</u> prescription. You can always read the doctors' bills but you can never read <u>their</u> prescriptions.	We should not imply that men only or generally are doctors. Changed to plural .
A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on <u>him</u> . <u>He</u> must cope with this or lose popularity.	A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on <u>her/him</u> . <u>She/he</u> must cope with this or lose popularity. Political leaders must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on <u>them</u> . <u>They</u> must cope with this or lose popularity.	She/he or he/she . Changed to plural .
A nurse knows that every day <u>she</u> will touch a life or a life will touch <u>hers</u> .	A nurse knows that every day <u>she/he</u> will touch a life or a life will touch <u>hers/his</u> . Nurses know that every day <u>they</u> will touch a life or a life will touch <u>theirs</u> .	
I'll have my <u>girl</u> make the meeting arrangements.	I'll ask my assistant (or secretary) to make the meeting arrangements.	
Maria is a career woman.	Maria is a professional. Maria is an engineer.	Nobody would say for example "John is a career man".
You guys go ahead.	Folks, all of you go ahead.	
The <u>ladies</u> on the committee supported the proposed amendment.	The <u>women</u> on the committee supported the proposed amendment.	Use lady generally in parallel with gentleman only.

VI. STEREOTYPING ADJECTIVES

Biased	Neutral	Comment
brotherly	comradely; friendly; cooperative	
effeminate	delicate; feeble; fussy; soft; languid; affected; gentle	
emasculated	weakened; enfeebled; diminished; toothless; tame; watered-down	
king-size	jumbo; gigantic	
ladylike	courteous; cultured	
like a man	resolutely; bravely	
maiden name	birth name	
maiden voyage	first voyage	
man enough	strong enough	
man of action	dynamic person	
manfully	resolutely; bravely; valiantly	
manly	strong; mature	
man-sized	complex; huge; enormous; difficult	
master (adjective)	expert; gifted; accomplished	
masterful	skilled; authoritative; commanding	
old maid; spinster	single person	
old wives' tale	superstition	
self-made man	self-made person; entrepreneur	
sportsmanlike	sporting, sporty	
The student's behaviour was typically female.	The student's behaviour was ... (specify).	Being specific reduces the possibility of stereotype bias.
tomboy	intrepid child; boisterous child	
weak sister	weak; cowardly	
workmanlike	serviceable; well-made; well executed; skilful	

VII. COMMON GENDER STEREOTYPES TO AVOID

Women are	Men are
Caretakers	Achievers
Cautious	Adventurous
Cheerful	Forceful
Cooperative	Competitive
Dependent	Independent
Emotional	Logical
Excitable	Stoic
Fearful	Brave
Fickle	Consistent
Flexible	Focused
Followers	Leaders
Fragile	Protectors
Gentle	Strong
Housekeepers	Breadwinners
Implementers	Decision-makers
Incompetent	Competent
Less important	More important
Modest	Ambitious
Nurturing	Assertive
Passive	Active
Patient	Impetuous
Peacemakers	Aggressive
Secretaries	Bosses
Soft-spoken	Out-spoken
Spectators	Doers
Subjective	Objective
Supporters	Leaders
Warm	Self-reliant
Weak	Powerful

VIII. PERSONAL TITLES AND FORMS OF ADDRESS

Biased	Neutral	Comment
Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Jane and John Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Smith; Mr. and Ms. Smith.	In this example, the wife's identity has been wholly absorbed by her husband's.
Miss. Mrs.	Ms.	Too often, people substitute <i>Ms.</i> for <i>Miss</i> and keep using <i>Mrs.</i> for married women, defeating the original purpose of adopting <i>Ms.</i> to create an equitable form of address for all women regardless of marital status. A woman's marital status is very often irrelevant to the matter in hand (participation in a meeting, etc.). Meanwhile, <i>Mr.</i> is used as a title for married and unmarried men and there is no masculine equivalent of <i>Miss/Mrs.</i> It is recommended to use <i>Ms.</i> (plural <i>Mesdames</i>) for married as well as unmarried women. Sometimes you may need to, ascertain which courtesy title the woman herself prefers; otherwise use <i>Ms.</i>
Dear Sir	Dear Sir or Madam; Dear Editor; Dear Service Representative; Dear Officer; To whom it may concern	

IX. ESTABLISHED TITLES AND QUOTES

<i>Man and the Biosphere</i> (UNESCO programme)		As a rule, existing titles of programmes, documents, etc. cannot be changed, but it is advisable to avoid generic <i>man</i> in new titles.
<i>History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind</i>	History of Humanity	This has been the official title since 1992.
<i>United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services</i>		The United Nations still has this Office. In other contexts, the office of an “ombudsman” is rendered gender-neutral by use of either “ombudsperson”, “ombuds” or “ombud”. Alternatively, a female ombudsperson might prefer to be called an “ombudswoman”.
“All men are created equal” (United States Declaration of Independence)	Cannot be altered, but can be paraphrased as such: The United States Declaration of Independence asserts that all people are created equal.	When paraphrasing, quotation marks must be removed.